



Property Of
Sierra Historic Sites Assoc.
Library

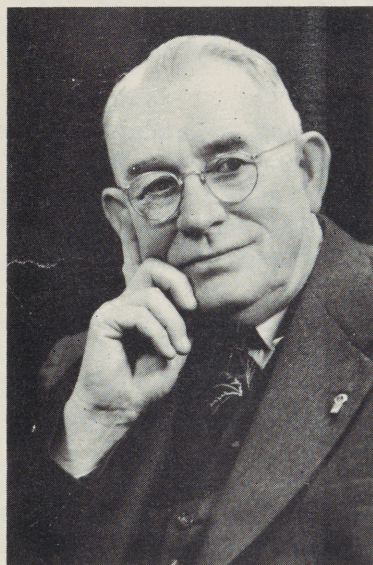
THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

MADERA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Volume XI - Number 2

April 1971

STANLEY MURRAY
MADERA COUNTY'S SECOND SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE



Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Murray

With the passing of Stanley Murray on December 23, 1963, Madera County lost one of its early and most distinguished pioneers. His 37 years of service as Judge of the Superior Court of Madera County brought an incorruptible sense of impartiality and integrity together with an outspoken honesty that was greatly respected by the legal profession as well as the general public.

Let us digress here and review the early years of Stanley Murray.

The Murray family has been associated with Madera County since 1870. In 1857, San Francisco was teeming with adventurers and gold seekers from all corners of the earth. The city had mushroomed into a boom town metropolis that spread over the wind-swept sand dunes overlooking the bay, where sailing vessels flying the flags of all

nations, rode at anchor. Around the Horn, in one of the clipper ships, had come the Barrett family. It was a stormy passage and the Straits of Magellan had almost devoured the vessel like it had other ships before that had risked the perilous voyage with passengers in search of gold. The Barretts settled in San Francisco. A child was born on August 27, 1857, and her name was Florence. William E. Murray, grandfather of Judge Stanley Murray, settled in the hills near Oakhurst (then called Fresno Flats) in 1870. Judge Murray's grandfather came to California in 1849 to fight Indians. Samuel Murray, son of William Murray, and Florence Barrett were married in San Francisco and came to Merced Falls. They moved permanently to the Oakhurst area in 1886.

Stanley Murray was born in Merced Falls on May 10, 1881. Stanley was the oldest child - he had two brothers, Ray and Irwin, and one sister, Florence. Irwin passed away in 1965 and Ray passed away in 1971. Florence Murray Rosasca lives in Stockton, California.

The Murray family operated a large cattle ranch - the ranch home being located between Ahwahnee and Oakhurst. The old ranch home was burned in the "Harlow Fire" on July 11, 1961.

After Stanley decided to go to San Francisco for further education, the rest of the family continued to operate the ranch. In San Francisco, he first went to work in the auditing department of the Southern Pacific Railroad, then later he went to work for the State in the office of the State Board of Prisons. During this time, he went to night school at a business college. (His knowledge of shorthand proved most valuable later on when he was hearing cases)

He then began the study of law at Kent Law School. Perhaps he became interested in law while working on the Prison Board as clerk on the Parole Board of San Quentin Prison. He received his degree from Kent Law School in 1911, returned to Madera and went into partnership with Robert L. Hargrove. In 1914, he was elected District Attorney of Madera County.

Judge Murray said that much of his education really came from the "school of hard knocks." He worked at Sugar Pine as a cable boxer - in fact, he was one of the earliest employees. (Sherwood Green explained that a cable boxer was the one who fed in the highline cable as logs were pulled in from the woods. Power was furnished by a "Donkey" engine.)

His elementary education was received at Fresno Flats School. He had many interests and had a broad knowledge of people; his experience on the Prison Board; living in San Francisco and getting his education the hard way; his mountain background; working with many different people at Sugar Pine, and his first hand knowledge of the Indians of Madera County, combined to provide him with a deep understanding and concern for all people.

Judge Murray's home in Madera was located at 421 North "D" Street. He married Elvina Bresno in 1905. They had six children: Florence Murray Mudge, Russell, Stanley, Jr., Lois Murray Richardson, Harold, and Irwin, who was killed in World War II.

Judge Stanley Murray passed away in 1963 at the age of 82 years. His wife, Elvina, is still living at 421 North D Street with her son, Stanley, Jr.

From a 1950 edition of a former Madera paper, "The Madera Citizen", an interesting story is printed about Judge Murray's mother, Florence Barrett Murray.

GRANDMA MURRAY, 93 YEARS YOUNG

"On August 27th, 1950 at the homestead in Oakhurst, Florence Barrett Murray celebrated her 93rd birthday, surrounded by sons, daughters, great grand children, grand children and friends that she had known for generations.

Though bedridden for the past three years, Mrs. Murray has a mind that is as active and alert as that of a teen ager. She knows what's going on all about her. She'll talk about the Korean War, taxes and other present-day problems that concern the modern generation with the intelligence of a well informed person.

It was an open house at Oakhurst at this memorable birthday anniversary that came at a moment when all of California is celebrating its 100th year of statehood. Present also, besides the immediate members of the family, was J. W. Fhy of Coarsegold, who celebrated his 93rd birthday last spring. It is an annual ritual with Mr. Fhy to visit Mrs. Murray every year on the occasion of her birthday. Also present were Doc and Mrs. Krohn of Coarsegold, and Mattie Fhy."

Grandma Murray died in 1952 at the age of 95. Judge Murray's father passed away in 1932 at the age of 80.

JUSTICE FOR BOTH SIDES

The following account is taken from the Madera Daily News Tribune of Sept. 22, 1959, about a year after Judge Murray's retirement:

What sort of judges do future Chief Justices of the United States Supreme Court practice before? Well, when Chief Justice Earl Warren was a young prosecuting attorney, he practiced before Madera's own Judge Stanley Murray.

"I used to be transferred all over the state," Murray said. When they needed a judge in Alameda County, for instance, he would be sent there from Madera County to preside. That was where District Attorney Earl Warren came into Murray's court for some of his first cases.

"I remember Earl Warren as one of the very able attorneys," Murray commented. "He was one of the most able and leading attorneys of the state."

Warren was just one of the many important lawyers that came before his court, Murray said. He said that in his 37 years on the bench he handled many big civil and criminal actions - so many that he couldn't say which was the most important or really the biggest.

"I have no basic philosophy of jurisprudence, excepting my aim was to see that justice was administered to both sides of any case." He said that his sole aim on the bench was to see that "substantial justice is obtained in any case."

Commenting on the possibilities of developing a legal philosophy, he said, "I never kept any memorandums or gave much thought to it. I have my old records, but haven't been back over them thoroughly."

He also said that he didn't think the practice of law today is more difficult than it was when he started out as a judge or as an attorney. Nor has there been any major change in the concept of legal practice that he knows of, he said.

SHERWOOD GREEN PAYS TRIBUTE

An interview with Attorney Sherwood Green gave us some interesting data on Judge Stanley Murray, as they were law partners for several years.

When Sherwood Green first became acquainted with Stanley Murray, he was Madera County District Attorney. In 1917, Green became Deputy District Attorney under Murray and continued to be with him until Murray was appointed Judge of the Superior Court of Madera County in 1921. Judge Murray recommended Sherwood Green for the position of District Attorney for the remainder of Murray's term.

Mr. Green mentioned Judge Murray's love of the mountain area around Oakhurst, and of his favorite hunting and fishing retreat at the head of Iron Creek at a little spot called Hogum, via Mt. Raymond. He enjoyed the outdoors and whenever he had the time he would go there.

Mr. Green stated that Judge Murray was a man of absolute integrity; that he never had heard of him being accused of being out of line in any way. He said that Judge Murray did not allow any foolishness in his courtroom; that the misbehavior of some defendants in courtrooms today would never have been tolerated by Judge Murray.

Sherwood Green emphasized Murray's knowledge of people, which made him an excellent Judge. The fact that Stanley Murray was reelected repeatedly for a period of 37 years proves that he was an able man.

Continuing his reminiscences, Green mentioned that by reason of Murray's courage and integrity, he was frequently called to Los Angeles and San Francisco to handle cases that were widely publicized. Mr. Green said he could not recall definite cases, as there were many, but many were cases that created newspaper publicity.

Mr. Green came to Madera County in 1915 directly from Stanford Law School and became acquainted with Stanley Murray very soon after that. Mr. Green is 80 years old and has been in Madera 56 years.

x x x x x x x x

Madera County has had seven Superior Court Judges since the County was formed. William M. Conley was the first, from 1893 to 1921 (he had the distinction of being one of the youngest ever to be appointed to the bench in California.) He retired in 1921, at which time Governor W. D. Stephens appointed Stanley Murray to fill the vacancy - Murray was Madera County District Attorney at the time. Judge Murray continued as Superior Court Judge until 1958, a period of 37 years - a total period of 65 years served by the first two Superior Court Judges.

To bring our readers up to date, we will list the other Judges since 1958:

M. D. Crocker, from Sept. 2, 1958 to Oct. 15, 1959
David Peckinpah, from Oct. 15, 1959 to Oct. 30, 1960
Mason Bailey, from Dec. 29, 1960 to Feb. 28, 1965
Everett L. Coffee, from Oct. 1, 1965 to Dec. 15, 1966
Jack L. Hammerberg, our present Superior Court Judge was appointed
Dec. 28, 1966

Judge Murray was a charter member of the Lions Club, a member of the Elks, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, the Madera Riding Club, and the Madera County Bar Association.

MASON BAILEY ALSO CONTRIBUTES

Mason Bailey was appointed District Attorney to fill out Sherwood Green's term and then continued as District Attorney for 13 years. When asked to comment on Judge Murray, he said about the same thing that others said who were associated with him; he was honest, fair, just, never given to spectacular behavior, but always concerned about justice.

Mr. Bailey said one of Judge Murray's most widely known cases was the trial of Rayna Carmen, a Mono Indian tried for murder of one of the McSwain brothers and wounding the other. Carmen had no attorney so Judge Murray appointed Mason Bailey. District Attorney John Boyle was the prosecuting attorney. After the trial, Rayna Carmen was convicted and given the death penalty. Both Bailey and Boyle felt that the jury should have been instructed to consider a charge of manslaughter. Judge Murray ruled against it. The case was referred to the State Supreme Court, referred back to Madera County, and Carmen was convicted again. Mason Bailey raised the question of jurisdiction as the crime was committed on Indian land - land allotted by the Federal Government. The case was referred to the United States Supreme Court. After 9 years, Rayna Carmen was placed in a Federal prison; at this time he is in California, in prison. Later, it was discovered that Carmen had a mental problem due to an earlier skull fracture.

Another story that illustrates faith and trust in humanity is told about the time Judge Murray held the deeds to a large part of the town site of Oakhurst (Fresno Flats.) The lots were so poorly described that no one knew who owned what. Example: "Starting at the corner of Westfall Saloon (which corner?) on to China Creek and then to a large boulder," plus many other equally indefinite descriptions, so that the County Surveyor, Richard Rue, was called in. The people involved were asked if they were willing to deed all their land to Judge Murray in order to settle disputes, and they agreed. In the meantime, Mr. Rue carefully surveyed all the holdings and then Judge Murray deeded each parcel of land back to the rightful owner. Only one disagreement resulted in over 30 or 40 parcels; this one was between one family and the Episcopal Church on the "Hill." Mr. Bailey worked on this case and it was settled with both sides satisfied.



Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Murray,
parents of Judge Stanley
Murray.

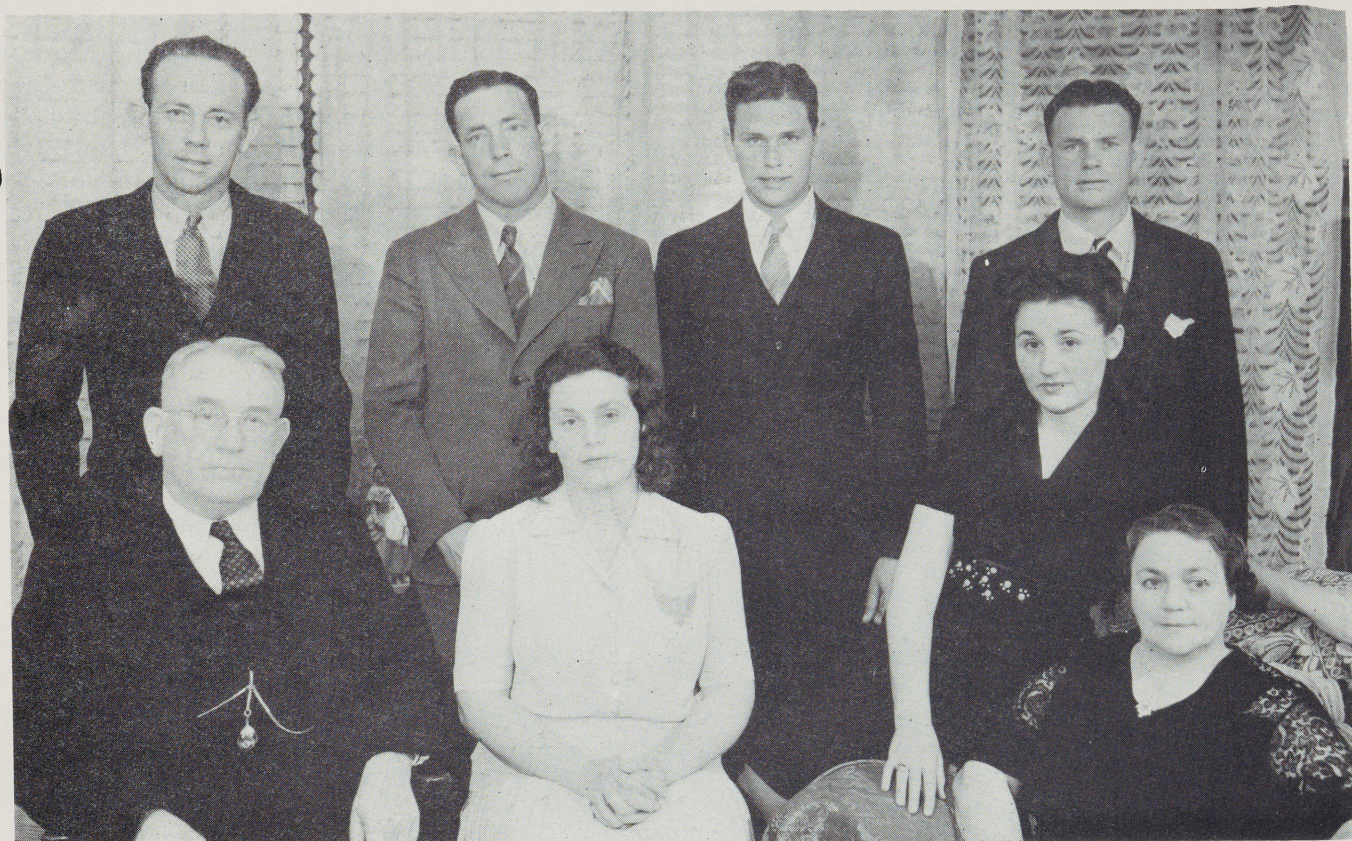


Old Ranch Home
Burned in 1961

Sugar Pine Flume
Crossed Murray Ranch



"Hogum" Cattle
Camp on Iron Creek



MURRAY FAMILY

Seated: Judge Stanley Murray. Florence Murray Mudge, Lois Murray Richardson, and Mrs. Murray.

Standing: Stanley, Jr., Irwin, Russell, and Harold.



OLD TIMERS' DAY PARADE - OCTOBER, 1931

Driver is Judge Stanley Murray. On the front seat with Murray is Supervisor Fritz Krohn. On the back seat is Supervisor Bob Yates and unidentified passenger. Stage coach is the property of the Madera County Historical Society.

CONTRIBUTORS

Newspapers: Madera Daily Tribune, Madera Citizen, Sierra Star.

Interviews: Sherwood Green, Mason Bailey, Lois Murray Richardson, Stanley Murray, Jr., and Florence Murray Mudge.

MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN VOL. XI - JAN. 1971

More information related to our story on the J. R. McDonald. It was 104.5 ft. long and weighed 137.56 tons. It was abandoned in 1918. It was launched in 1899, so it was 12 years old when it made its famous trip up the San Joaquin. Raymond W. Hillman, Vice President of the 8th Region, California Historical Society, was kind enough to send us this information.

Since Skaggs Bridge is involved in the story, here is more complete data on it:

Skaggs Bridge was completed on Jan. 7, 1908. It was a joint construction of Fresno and Madera counties - Fresno paying 3/5ths and Madera paying 2/5ths of the cost, which was \$44,297. When it was finished, the counties had a celebration. Buggies and surreys filled with people came from miles around, bringing basket lunches for a picnic. Boats came up the San Joaquin River from Stockton. The bridge was named for A. A. Skaggs, an early pioneer who rented land along the river for several miles. Much rejoicing was manifested over having a bridge, as people had forded the river for years where the water was low enough to do so.

YOUR HISTORIAN

Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in this issue. We realize it should have reached you before this, but it takes time to research, to interview, and to secure pictures; however, if you haven't paid your dues for 1971, this will be the last issue you will receive, as you become delinquent as of July 1st, 1971.

OLD TIMERS' DAY

The date for "Old Timers' Day" this year is October 2, 1971. A King and Queen have been chosen.

WE NEED PICTURES

If you have old photographs of your family, homes, or historical spots related to Madera County, we would appreciate your loaning them for display at Griffin Hall on October 1 and 2. We will take good care of them and see that they are returned to you, or if you wish to give them to the Historical Society, we will be happy to accept them. Please contact one of the following members:

Mrs. Doris Seabury - 1415 West 5th Street
Phone: 673-3249

Mrs. Anne Grattone - 120 North C Street
Phone: 673-3272

Mrs. Elvira Ahles - 308 North B Street
Phone: 673-0249

ANTIQUe AND COLLECTIBLES SALE
HELD AT MADERA DISTRICT FAIR GROUNDS
JUNE 5 & 6, 1971

Mrs. Hilloray Brown, General Chairman, and all committee members join in expressing sincere appreciation for all your help and cooperation, in labor, donated food, and donations of money. A more complete report will appear in the third quarter Historian.

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by the Madera County Historical Society, P. O. Box 478, Madera, Calif. 93637. Subscription, 50¢ per copy - \$3 per year, and is included in membership in the Society. Please credit "The Madera County Historian" when reproducing any part of it.